THE

Sinfulneſs of Worſhipping

GOD

With Men's

INSTITUTIONS

As it was Delivered in a

SERMON

By *Samuel Willard*, Teacher of a Church in *BOSTON*.

1 Cor. 11. 23. *For I have received of the Lord, that which I alſo delivered unto you.*
Mat. 28. 20. *Teaching them to obſerve all thin whatſoever I have commanded y*

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Mat. 15. 9. *But in vain do they worſhip me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.*

THE Scribes and Phariſees bare inveterate malice againſt Chriſt, for his ſearching Doctrines, by which he detected them of groſs Hypocriſy: and the more confirmation he gave thereunto by his Miracles, the deeper rooting did their prejudice take in their hearts; and becauſe his ſpotleſs Converſation ſecured him from any impeachment, referring to the Law of God: they ſought occaſion againſt him with reſpect to the Cuſtoms of men: accordingly in the beginning of this chapter, they are brought

in picking a quarrel with him because *his Disciples did not wash their hands before they sat down to their meals*: the pretence on which they ground their contest, is, that it *was against the Tradition of the Elders*; they plead *Antiquity* for it, and the Authority of the *Sanhedrim*, which to neglect, they account a scandal: and they suppose that Christ was to blame for this Omission of his Disciples, either for prohibiting, or at least not commanding them: Christ therefore undertakes the Justification of them and himself; they did well to omit this Ceremony; and that, not only because it was an indifferent thing, and for that reason it ought not to be accounted a matter of scandal for any to neglect it: But also, as it was, in the circumstances of it, a thing unlawful for them to do; as the whole of his reply carrieth it: This Custom among the Jews was not a thing meerly civil, but was made Religious, and had a Symbolical Holiness affixed to it, and by prescription, it was now grown a Ceremony in Worship; and men were esteemed Ceremonially defiled, who did not attend it; and by this means it became unlawful.

Christ in his reply, useth Arguments *ad hominem*, and *ad rem*. 1. *Ad hominem*; verse 3. to 7. they of all men, had no reason to be offended, for they were notorious Offenders, in that they *had made void the command of God by their Traditions*:

Traditions: which he exemplifies in the fifth *Command*, they had their *beams in their own eyes*, and therefore very unfit to *pluck out Motes in others*, if there were any. 2. *Ad rem*, where;

1. He discovers the Hypocrisy of their Traditional Worship *verſ.* 7. 8, 9.

2. He instructs the Auditory in the vanity of this particular Tradition, *verſ.* 10, to 21.

In his Taxing them with Hypocrisy, he refers them to the Prophet, who had laid the same charge to their Fore-fathers, for the very same reason: and it refers to, *Isa.* 29. 13. Here are two things in which this their Hypocrisy is detected.

1. Their putting of God off with Lip Service, whilst their hearts were absent, *ver.* 8

2. Their introducing of Humane Institutions into the Worship of God.

In the words then there are two things,

1 The sin which is here reproved; *Teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of men*, i. e. introducing Humane Institutions into, and making them parts of Divine Worship:

Here observe;

1. The subject matter about which this Sin was conversant; *The Commandments of men*; i. e. mens Inventions, by which he doth not understand civil Laws respecting civil Government; for they were not wont to be men's Texts to

Preach

Preach upon, and as for the Authority of Rulers to Enact such Laws; Christ never called it into question: Nor yet can he intend the *civil Sanctions* which are put upon *Divine Institutions* by Humane Authority, for this also is to be accounted warrantable, as well from Scripture-precept, as the Example of Godly Rulers in all the Ages of the Church of God; but that which he intends, is *things devised by men, and imposed as parts of Worship, which are no where commanded by God:* such a thing was this under debate, *viz.* the washing of the hands before meat.

2. The sin which he chargeth them with on this account, *Teaching Doctrines.* The word translated, *Teaching*, is used in the New Testament for *Preaching the Gospel*; and the word translated, *Doctrines*, is used for the *Articles of Religion*, it therefore intends, a Preaching of these up, as matters of Conscience, and binding them upon men as Duties incumbent on them, on whatsoever pretext They were the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* whom our Saviour had now to do withal; who pretended to be Teachers of others; it was therefore a special sin they were under the guilt of, that they bound these burdens on mens Consciences, by pleading mens authority to make Traditions, and impose them upon others; but he also insinuates, that, as it was their sin to teach such things to the people; so

it

it was no leſs a ſin in others to receive, and practice according to ſuch Teachings: for this whole Diſcourſe is brought in to juſtify his Diſciples for Non-compliance with them; and himſelf for prohibiting them ſo to do.

2. The reproof it ſelf is contained in the ſharp cenſure which he paſſeth upon this ſin; *viz.* that it is *vain worſhip*. The word ſignifies that which is *to no purpoſe, frivolous, loſt labour*, that will do the perſon no good at all, which is idle and impertinent; and it may have reſpect either:

1. To the worſhip it ſelf, that it is fooliſh, and therefore not to be admitted; or,

1. To the Worſhippers, that they do ſpoil their whole Worſhip by ſuch Additaments, it makes all the reſt to be to little or no purpoſe; it is a dead fly in the Oyntment.

From the words we may rationally infer this:

DOCTRINE

Mens Inſtitutions cannot be admitted and practiced in the Worſhip of God, without incurring the guilt of a very great ſin.

There is not only a ſin committed by them that invent, and appoint them, nor only by them

them that preach them up, and tye them upon mens Consciences; of which, it is not my present business to treat; but it is also no small sin in those that comply with, and yield conformity to them.

In the clearing up of this Doctrine, we may enquire,

1. What we are here to understand by the Institutions of men?

2. Wherein the sin under consideration doth consist?

3. How it appears to be so very great a Sin?

1. *What we are here to understand by the Institutions of men?*

A. Whatsoever is made a part of Religious Worship, wholly by Humane Authority. Here we must observe,

1. The head which it properly refers to, viz. *Religious worship.* There are the ordinances of men, which we are in the Scripture Commanded to yield Obedience unto, and that for *Conscience sake:* Civil Government is doubtless of Gods appointment; and as Rulers ought to make the moral Law the Rule of their Governing, so there are divers Prudentials about which they have authority from God, to enact such Laws as are most conducible to the benefit of their Subjects: but this is of another nature. Now in worship we consider, either the *object of* it, and that is God only, or the matter and the

Media,

Media, and they are either *Natural* or *Inſtituted*; the latter of theſe is here ſpecially reſpected; *viz.* thoſe external ways and means by which this Worſhip is to be paid unto God: theſe are in Scripture called *Ordinances* and *Commands*, by a ſpecial appropriation: and becauſe they are ſo, they muſt depend upon ſome Authority that doth command them, and this muſt both appoint and give a Sanction to them.

2. The reference which it bears to this head; it is made a part of it, we are warily to diſtinguiſh between that which is *Eſſential*, and that is meerly *accidental*, or a common adjunct: Man is to be conſidered, not only as he is Religious, but alſo as he is a man: and in this laſt reſpect, there are many things that are inſeparable from his actions, and for that reaſon, are common to all both *natural*, *civil*, and *religious*: ſuch as *time*, and *place*, and what elſe of like nature: and therefore their conſideration in Religion is not Eſſential, but Accidental to it, and that have a meer civil reſpect in it: and are directed to by the Law of nature, and common prudence is to direct men in their *uſage* of them; though theſe alſo, when they have a religious reſpect put on them, are made eſſential, and come under the things our Saviour here refers to: But a thing may then be ſaid to be made a part of Worſhip, when it hath ſuch an *Holineſs* put upon it, as to be re-

puted a *medium* of our *Communion with God*: and this is not to be judged of, by what men ſay of it, but by the neceſſary conſequence of the uſage of it: of this nature were all the Obſervances of the Ceremonial Law of Old, & they continued to be ſuch, till ſuch time as Chriſt aboliſhed them; and ſuch was this uſage which he here condemns in our Context: it was not the waſhing of their hands at meals, as it was a point of civility and outward cleanlineſs, that our Saviour was offended at, or would ever have found fault withall; but it was for their placing of a *Ceremonial Holineſs* in this *Tradition*, thinking that God was a great deal more Honoured by them that did it, than by ſuch as omitted it: which Opinion of theirs removed it from among *Civils*, and placed it among *religious* things.

3 When its being ſo made depends wholly upon Humane Authority. *Natural Worſhip* is ſuch as the nature of the object to whom, & of the ſubject by whom it is to be performed, doth require, and is therefore taught by the light of nature: ſuch is Prayer to God, fearing and reverencing him, *&c.* But *Inſtituted Worſhip*, is ſomething that is *poſitive*, and muſt needs therefore depend upon ſome Authority: it is for that reaſon a duty, becauſe it is enjoyned, and muſt ſuppoſe a power in him who doth enjoyn it, ſo to do: Now a thing may be ſaid to be made by

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the Inſtitutions of men, when not only the *injunction*, but alſo the *deviſing* of it proceeds from them. In this reſpect *Jeroboam* is ſaid to *offer Sacrifice in a month which he deviſed in his own heart*, 1 *Kings* 12. ult. not only the impoſition, but the thing impoſed derives from men: they firſt invent, and then they command it; and it may be ſaid thus to be commanded, not only when lawful authority do paſs it into an Ordinance, and give it a Sanction, by affixing penalties to the neglect of it; but alſo, when by Cuſtom or Tradition, it is ſo brought into practice of a people, that it becometh a ſcandal to any that ſhall omit it, and they are looked upon to be irreligious for not carefully complying with it; and ſuch was the preſent caſe in our Context;

Q. Wherein the ſin under our conſideration doth conſiſt?

A. 1. *We may conſider it negatively*,

And here,

1. It doth not neceſſarily ſuppoſe a change of the object; though it may be ſo interpretatively, for *God is not pleaſed to acknowledge that to be done to him, which is not done by his order*, but ſtill, it may be profeſſedly devoted to the honour of the true God, ſo was that feaſt, *Exod.* 32. 5. Men may pretend a *true object*, and yet uſe a *falſe medium*: it is left as a mark of infamy upon the Jews, that they *offered Sa-*

crifice in the high places, (places which they had conſecrated of their own heads, and put holineſs upon;) although it *was only to the true God*, 2 Chron. 33. 17.

2 Nor are they only guilty, that wholly lay aſide the inſtitutions of God, and ſurrogate the ventions of men in their room. The Jews, der their greateſt Apoſtaſy, kept up Templeorſhip, obſerved the days that were of Gods n appointment, attended on the ſtated feaſts, fered thoſe ſacrifices which had been appointd them by *Moſes*, (though poſſibly they were ot ſo careſull and conſtant in them,) but they acked their own Traditions to them, and ſo made a mixture of one and the other; men may go to the Houſe of God, and attend upon his Worſhip in thoſe Ordinances which he hath Inſtituted, and they may annex unto them a worſhip which he never gave any Order about: the men that offered in the high places, came to the Temple too.

2. Poſitively, in two things.

1. When men have any manner of fellowſhip with ſuch a worſhip as this is. Any thing wherein we partake with others, in that which is ſinful, is a ſin, and renders us guilty of that very ſin; hence we have that Dehortation, *Eph.* 5. 11. *Have no fellowſhip with the*

the unfruitful works of Darkneſs, and men do contract ſuch a fellowſhip, more ways then one; it is done not only by performing the ſame things, our ſelves, and placing Religion upon them, but by our being preſent at ſuch Worſhip and thereby Joyning in it with them that ſo do, and ſo far countenancing of them in it: Our preſence being a ſignal Approbation, whilſt we no ways repro e it; or by our pleading for ſuch things as lawful in themſelves, and therefore not abſolutely to be condemned in thoſe that practiſe them, or by our allowing of thoſe that are under our watch and command to give their attendance on ſuch a Worſhip as that is.

2. When we pin our faith for any part of Worſhip that we do perform, on the authority of men. Suppoſe the thing it ſelf be really a part of the worſhip which is of Divine Inſtitutions, yet if we do not *ſearch the Scriptures to ſee whether it be indeed ſo* or other-wiſe, as thoſe *Noble Bereans* did, for which they are commended, *Acts.* 17. 11. but contentedly take it upon truſt, and all the pretence we can plead for our doing of it, is that ſuch and ſuch, Holy, wiſe, able, Learned Men ſo practiſed, we incur this cenſure juſtly; I know there is a good reſpect to be had for ſuch men, and great uſe to be made of them; but ſtill, if their authority, and ſo ſaying

ing be the Basis on which we lay the stress of our practice, and the highest reason we can give for it, this is to worship God, not for his Authority, but on Humane Authority; so that though it should be Gods Worship in it self, yet it becomes man's institution as it is attended by us.

3. How it appears to be so very great a Sin?

A. That it is really a sin thus to do, will be evident by making it out to be a great sin; and that will be cleared by considering of those Rules by which the greatness of a sin is to be judged of, which I shall here instance only in three particulars.

1. We may judge of the greatness of it by the dishonour that is done to God by it: All sin receives its true denomination in *that it is against God*, and the malignity of it doth properly consist, in that it is a coming *short of his glory*: and for this cause, the more he is dishonoured by it, the more agravated it must needs be.

Now there are these considerations that may be had of of this sin in this respect.

1. That

1. That it is a ſin againſt the *Second Command* of the firſt Table.

Now All ſins that are againſt the firſt Table, are more directly againſt God; he being the next and immediate object of it, whereas the next object of Second Table Duties is our Neighbour, all the Duties of this Table are to be done by us, not only for him as our Lord, and Law-giver for ſo are the other alſo, but to him, as he on whom they are to Terminate; if then we pray, we muſt pray to God, if we faſt we are to do it to him; that therefore is the fault found in them, *Zech.* 7. 5. *that they did it not to him.* Now the ſecond command hath a proper aim at inſtructing us about inſtituted Worſhip: In the firſt we are told whom we are to Worſhip, and what is that Natural Worſhip which is due to him; in the ſecond, What manner of Worſhip he will have paid him by us; it therefore enjoyns us to take his Directions in it, and to receive the Command from his mouth, not daring *to add to, or to take away any thing from it*, hence there are ſo many ſerious and ſolemn cautions given about it, *Deut.* 4. 2. 12, 32. *Prov.* 30. 6. & elſewhere.

2 Hence it is a Sin that is directly againſt the *Divine Prerogative*: when God gave his poſitive Commandment, to his people of old, he was pleaſed to ſet his name to them, as a King doth to his Royal Edicts; *I Am the LORD*:

herein

herein manifeſtly intimating that the authority of all ſuch Inſtitutions depends, entirely upon his Prerogative, that the Obligation of them lies in his being Lord and Law-giver to his People, ſo that for any to undertake in this matter to make any ordinances of their own heads in worſhip, and bind them upon mens Conſciences, is an Invaſion upon his Soveraignty, of which he is very tender; and who ſhall Dare to fetch the warrant for the practiſing of any thing of this nature from any authority inferiour unto his? muſt not this of neceſſity be to put men upon Gods Throne; and what can that be leſſe then an act of Treachery or Rebellion againſt the Crown of Heaven? and what deeper died a blemiſh can ſin have Charged upon it?

3. It caſts a great Reproach upon *the wiſdom of God.* He hath made no ſmall diſplays of his wiſdom, in contriving the way wherein he will be worſhipped by his Creatures, ſuitably and ſufficiently to anſwer his end, by Gaining to himſelf Glory, and procuring the Salvation of his Choſen: and for this reaſon *Iſrael* of old were ſaid to be a *wiſe people*; on account of their enjoying *his Ordinances*, *Deut.* 5 6 but herein we make men wiſer than God, whilſt our thus practiſing declares us to ſuppoſe that they can Meliorate his worſhip, by their adding of thoſe things to it, as if men

knew

knew better than he, what is moſt advantageous to his Glory and our Salvation.

4. It caſts a great reflection upon the *Faithfulneſs of Chriſt in his Church.* Moſes was a Type of Chriſt; and herein doth the Apoſtle make the parallel between the Type and the Antitype, *Heb.* 3. 2. *that he was Faithful to him that appointed him, as Moſes was in all his Houſe.* And this hath a peculiar reſpect unto Inſtituted Worſhip. Now we find that *Moſes* preſcribed by Divine Appointment, the whole of that in the times of the Law, even to the very *Pins* and *Sockets*, and *fillets*, of the Tabernacle, and all this Exactly *according to the Pattern given him in the Mount, ſo as that nothing* was wanting, or might be added: and thus muſt Chriſt have done in the Goſpel Church, or elſe the Parallel will not hold, but the Type muſt outſhine the Antitype, which it never did; that therefore was a Propheſy of Goſpel-times though delivered in Old-Teſtament-Language, *Ezek.* 43 11. *ſhew them the form of the houſe, and the faſhion therof, and the goings out therof, and the comings in therof, and all the forms therof, and all the Ordinances therof, and all the forms therof, and all the Laws therof, and write it in their ſight, that they may keep the whole form therof, and all the Ordinances therof, and do them*: where-

as thus to do, is to ſignifie that we acknowledg and believe that Chriſt hath omitted ſomthing that is Eſſential to his Worſhip.

5. It is to *impoſe upon God, and* that is a great ſin. We do nothing leſs herein, than to give Laws to the great King, from whoſe mouth we ought to receive all. Acts of worſhip are deſigned for Communion between God and his people; and he hath promiſed to them that do rightly worſhip him, that *he will be among them and bleſs them*; which is their great encouragement to give attendance to his Inſtitutions, becauſe there is a bleſſing in them; but God hath obliged himſelf no farther than to his own Appointments; whereas in theſe things we ſay, that God ſhall come and hold Communion with us in Mens Preſcriptions, that theſe ſhall oblige his preſence with us; for without this ſuppoſal, Ordinances muſt loſe their proper end; and this muſt needs be the higheſt arrogancy that can be.

6. Hence it is a *vain Worſhip*, ſo it is called, *Text*, and this muſt needs denominate it ſinful. To do any thing in vain, is folly, but to Worſhip God in vain, is groſs iniquity; and what leſs than vain muſt that of neceſſity be, in which we can promiſe to our ſelves no fellowſhip with God, or participation in his grace, except he will for our pleaſure, lay aſide his Prerogative, and ſubmit himſelf to the

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prescriptions of men? if men only were imposed upon, it were not so much; but to think to impose upon God, is in it self-presumption, and will prove ruine in the event.

2. We may judge of the greatness of this sin, by the Displeasure of God which appears against it; it can be no little provocation, that God manifests his sore indignation at, & this discovers it self.

1. In the *Jealousy* which he entertains on this account Where is it that he declares himself to be a *jealous God*, but in the matters of Instituted Worship? Exod. 20 5. *Solomon* tells us, that *Jealousy is the rage of a man*; when therefore God assumes it to himself, it must needs intimate his great indignation; a person is not wont to be jealous but in something that he placeth a very high account upon, and consequently looks upon himself to be basely abused, if he be touched in that; and thus doth God in point of this Prerogative, to have the acknowledgment from his people, that he alone hath the ordering of every part of his Worship.

2. In the awful *Threatnings* which he hath Denounced against this sin, we find that he hath menaced *Generations to come*, that they

ſhall feel the ſmart of their *Fathers* prevarication upon this account, *Exod.* 20. 5. We ſee therefore how he threatnens the ten Tribes for *making of many Altars*, and *building of Temples*, Hoſ. 8. 11, 14. the ſumme is this ſin ſhould increaſe their guilt, till it had rooted them out; yea, when *Iſrael* had made the Golden Calf, which was a new mode of Worſhip; and the Feaſt held to it, is called a *Feaſt to Jehovah*, Exod. 32. 5. God both plagued them at preſent for it, and alſo threatens them to keep it in remembrance againſt them for afterwards, verſe 34. The *Jews* therefore have an obſervation, *That no Judgment ever after fell upon that people, but it had an Ounce of the Golden Calf in it.*

3. In the ſevere *Judgements* which he hath executed upon men for this ſin it is well to be Remarked, that the firſt quarrel that ever God had with mankind, was about Inſtituted Worſhip; and a tranſgreſſion of a poſitive precept referring to the Worſhip of God, in a *Sacrament*; hath filled the world with all the miſeries which to this day it groans under. *Nadab* and *Abihu* will offer up Incenſe unto God with ſtrange fire, and it brought them to a ſtrange and ſudden end, *Gideon's Ephod became a Snare to his houſe*, and it coſt the lives of ſixty nine of his Sons. *Jeroboam* dedica-

ted his *golden Calves* to the Worſhip of God, and it rooted out every branch of his family, and at length carried the whole Land into Captivity. And theſe things are written for our Learning; the *Jealouſie* of God hath many times *burnt like a fire*, and conſumed root and branch of ſuch as have thus tempted him.

3. It may alſo be ſeen in the *harm* that men do to themſelves by it; and this is conſequent upon the former. Men *ſin againſt their own Souls* by thus doing; and that is a great ſin; and this harm will eſpecially appear in three things.

1. They certainly loſe all the labour and coſt that they lay out upon ſuch Worſhip; this alſo is implied in calling of it *vain Worſhip*; and this loſs brings unknown damage along with it. In matters of Worſhip, men are more peculiarly concerned for the furthering of their own Salvation; it is therefore a Spiritual Loſs that men ſuſtain by this: if they worſhipped God aright, how much might they forward their everlaſting good by it? for it would afford them the opportunity of the neareſt Communion with God, that is to be enjoyed before ſuch time as the *Glaſs* ſhall be removed, and he be *ſeen face to face*; but now they do nothing at all towards this: they do but trifle in matters of Eternity: and by

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reaſon of this they come to ſuſtain an Eternal Loſs.

2. It hazards our loſing the good of the Inſtitutions of God. The words of our Text ſeems to intimate, as if the whole Worſhip were rendred *vain* by this mixture, and truly it cannot be denied to be a Righteous Judgment of God, to withdraw that bleſſing from his own Inſtitutions, which hath its abſolute dependance upon his Influence, with reſpect to thoſe that are fond of interweawing Humane Inventions with them; nay, uſually, when they lay themſelves out ſo much upon theſe, they too often neglect the right improvement of the other; and are not ſeldom puniſhed by God, in being left to fall into all ſorts of *Immoralities*: this ſin very ſeldome goes alone, but is wont to have a Train of other grievous ſins attending upon it; and this is according to God's fore warning, Pſal. 81. 11, 12. *Iſrael would none of me, ſo I gave them up to their own hearts luſts.*

3. Men by thus doing expoſe themſelves to the danger of being deprived of Gods Inſtitutions, when men cannot reſt ſatisfied with Gods appointments, but they muſt have more, and ſuch as come out of a mint which hath no warrant for the Coining them; he often

Righteouſly

Righteously takes these away from them; partly by leaving them gradually to lay them aside, first one, and then another; because it may be, both cannot be conveniently attended; Mens Commandments, Thrust out Gods Institutions; The *Altar of Damascus* justles away the *Brazen Altar*, and it must now be put in a corner, & serve only for some private Devotions; partly by bringing of Desolating Judgments which lay all waste: thus the Kingdom of Judah, in time lost their Temple, and Altar, and Sacrifices, and were carried into a fearful Captivity, and this sin was a leading one to the procuring of these Dismal Calamities.

USE I.

For Information in two particulars.

1. That indifferency in the matter is not sufficient to justify a Tradition in Worship: for what though the thing it self be not a sin to be done civily; yet by being made a commandment, which borrows its Authority from men, and so thrust into the Worship of God as a part of it; it now becomes a piece of *vain Worship*: what can be more indifferent than

than *washing one's hands* in order to eating our food; the thing hath no harm in it at all; yea, it may sometimes occasionally be a point of cleanliness and good manners to do it, when the not doing it would be offensive to our own and others Stomachs: but if this once come to have *Religion* put upon it, and it must be accounted a Note of greater Sanctity in them that do it, and a Token of unholiness in such as neglect it, exposing them to scandal, now Christ will by no means admit that his Disciples should practise it: Had it been only a civil custome of the Nation, he would never have found fault with it, such as was offering them water to wash their feet, he therefore reflects on him: *Luke* 7. 44 but he censures and condemns this, and good reason, for it is *vain*, a man can get no good by it, nor do God any honour with it; it therefore doth not serve to any end or purpose at all, but wholly falls short of the very design of Worship: a plea therefore from indifferency in the thing is vain, for the excusing, much more for the warranting of any Tradition, which by the commandment of men *loseth its indifferency, and is tied as a burden on mens Consciences.*

2. That a Divine Precept is necessary to warrant every part of Religious Worship.

Instituted

Inſtituted Worſhip muſt be able to prove its Legitimacy by Inſtitution, for, becauſe it's not natural but poſitive, it depends upon Authority: its obligation therefore can be of no greater ſtrength than the Authority of its Author can put upon it; & that muſt be founded in his right to command it; all inſtructions derive their Authority either from God, or the Creature: if it be from God, then he hath ſignified his mind about it in ſcripture, and that in particular; for he hath no where by any general indulgence given away this liberty of his to any other Authority in the world, to have the dominion of the Conciences of men, or to give rules of worſhip; but hath on the one hand ſtrongly prohibited it and ſeverely threatned any that ſhall preſume to do it; if then any ſuch derive from men let them ſhew their Authority, if they expect them to be entertained; The Authorizing of any part of worſhip belongs to the *ſecond*, and not to the *fifth Command*; and muſt for that reaſon have a Divine Warrant. Hence it follows that there is nothing to be received by us on this account, but what hath God's Seale affixt to it: it is therfore enough to ſet us down reſolved againſt any ſuch thing, if we can ſay there is a ſilence about it in the ſcripture; that God hath nowhere Commanded it in his word, either ex-

preſly or by juſt and neceſſary conſequence, it is no order of his deviſing: Scripture ſilence about any Tradition, gives it a full condemnation whatever pleas men may bring for the juſtification of it: although they may pretend that it is very profitable, that many have bin edified by it; that it is a very prudent way to ſecure the Intereſts of Religion, that many wiſe, holy and learned men have pleaded for and practiſed it, that there is much of decency in it, and the thing in it ſelf is no ways harmful: all this is fully anſwered with that one word, *God hath ſpoken nothing about it, Heb. 7. 14. it never entred into his heart to enjoyn it, Jer. 7. 31.*

USE II.

This may put us upon asking whether God manageth no part of his controverſy with us upon this account. It is a time wherin God is making diſcoveries of his Holy diſpeaſure againſt us, in a whole ſeries of frowning Providences that we are labouring under, witneſſing that he is not a little offended at this his people; it is therefore a time for deep heart ſearching, and in the doing of it, it will not be a miſs to make a little enquiry for this ſin among the reſt: poſ-

ſibly

ſibly it may be ſuppoſed that of all the ſins that a people of God are wont to be charged withal, theſe Churches are leaſt guilty in this Article, of any: however if we look narrowly, there may for ought I know be enough to humble us before God, and put us upon Repentance; it may be we may find ſome that have willingly and upon choice, exchanged the more pure worſhip of God, for that which is more mixt, and had much rather to ſerve Him at an high place, than at the Sanctuary: are there not they that have obſerved days of Humane conſecration, and put a title of Holineſs upon them, though they have expreſſed little of it in the manner of their obſervation? It may be there are Traditions, by cuſtom grown into Ordinances, gotten at leaſt into ſome of our Churches, which can ſhew no warrant under Chriſts hand to authorize them, and yet it hath been an offence not to comply with and cry them up; hath there not been too much of a pinning our Faith on the credit or practice of others, attended on, with a wofull neglect of ſeeking to know what is the mind of Chriſt in it?

This I am ſure of, that an aſpiring mind is Natural to Fallen Man, and will be ſtirring whilſt there is Corruption in us, and this is greatly delighted in tampering with things

that are above us, and particularly to be patching in Religion; but let us beware to our ſelves in this, *The God we have to do with is a jealous God*; and if there be any ſuch thing, we had need very carefully look after it and remove it, God will elſe Charge us for *committing of Lewdneſs*, and deal with us accordingly.

USE III.

Be we then Exhorted to avoid this ſin, ſo far as there may have bin any Guilt contracted, if not willingly and knowingly, yet if ignonorantly and through neglect, let us repent of and turn from it, and let us ſet our ſelves more ſtrenuouſly againſt it for the time forward: is it a ſin ſo great? let not us then think it little, or our ſelves to be out of the danger of falling into it; and to move us to be the more careful in our endeavours againſt it, let us conſider,

1. There are no ſmall Temptations to it from within, and from without: the world and your own corrupt hearts have a great deal to ſay and plead, which is ſuited to the fleſh, to inſinuate into you unto a compliance with ſuch things: theſe things are many of them adapted to the carnal wiſdom of men; and are eaſily cloathed with divers religious pretences,

pretences, and how many ways they are ſeemingly advantageous to the promoting of Piety; theſe all muſt be withſtood, if you will not be baſled into this ſin: beſides there are no ſmall arguments, from the lawfulneſs of the things in themſelves, and ſcandal apt to ariſe from a non-compliance with them.

2. Except we thus do, we ſhall directly vacate our Fathers deſign in Planting of this Wilderneſs. It is certain, that their Errand hither was to ſequeſter themſelves into a quiet corner of the world, where they *might enjoy Chriſt's unmixed Inſtitutions, and leave them uncorrupted to their Poſterity*; and if this deſign of theirs were unworthy of them, and reproachful to their names; let it then be buried with them, and forgotten, and no more mention made of it to ſtain their memories withal; but if it were worth their parting with ſo many comforts and conveniences of a pleaſant Land, in which they enjoyed a conſiderable ſhare, and the expoſing of themſelves to the ſuffering of ſo many hardſhips, and almoſt unconquerable difficulties of an Uncultivated Deſart, and ſo many diſcouragements caſt in their way, which were in themſelves very ungrateful to the minds of men; let us not caſt this reproach upon it and them, which we ſhall certainly do, if we depart from the ſtrict avoidance of whatſoever Wor-

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ship doth not derive from the Precept of God, and Appointment of Jesus Christ: in every such act, we call them fools; and this will rise up in judgment against us another day.

3. We cannot else stand to our explicit Covenant. That it is lawful and a duty for the people of God solemnly to enter into and renew Covenant, and that frequently referring to the matters of Gods House, and to all duties wherein they stand oblig'd to serve him, the Scripture is full, and we have divers Examples there Recorded; it being too true, that a Professing People are apt to forget themselves, and fall under neglects, and for this cause ought to be doing something to quicken themselves up and bind their Souls to their work: and what is this for? not to find out any new ways of worshipping God; that would be a Conspiracy, instead of a Covenant; but it is to reform any thing that is amiss, to revive any thing that is decayed, to restore that which is lost, and to ratifie that which ought to be: Now these Churches have declaredly Covenanted with God, and mutually, *that we will serve the Lord with no other manner of Worship, but that which he hath appointed and established in his Word*; and do we think that he will be trifled withal in a Covenant and Vow that hath been made by us before Angels and men?

Hence

3. Hence our ſo doing will leave us under the Guilt of *Apoſtaſy*: to depart from any thing which God hath required of us, and we have Covenanted with him to perform, will certainly have this brand upon it: and it will be ſo much the more aggravated, by all that light which God hath afforded to ſhew us the ſinfulneſs of ſo doing; which will take away all Cloaks from us, and there hath been not a little of that, which we have enjoyed the advantage of: yea, and that which will make it yet more provoking to God, and dangerous for us, is that this will be an *Apoſtaſy* in that very thing, which is the *Teſt* upon which God tries the *Churches* in *New-England*.

FINIS.